

# The Comparison/Contrast Method

Using **Comparison & Contrast** as your method of analysis means, simply, finding **connections** between multiple things and discussing them in a logical, organized manner.

You do this by developing **2 topics at the same time**, and then **examine their similarities** OR **their differences** in order to arrive at a SINGLE CONCLUSION about them.

Choosing Comparison/Contrast as your **method of analysis** means:

- choosing a topic with **two parts**
- and then choosing your organizational structure (**point-by-point** or **block**)
- and then choosing some key **transitional phrases** to **help you move between your topics** in order to make your paragraph more coherent and cohesive

When you choose a topic, choose one with **two parts** that have **enough in common** to actually make them comparable—

**Do Not** choose subjects that are **so big** that you cannot possibly handle all the relevant points in a single paragraph, and

**Do Not** choose subjects that are **so alike** that you cannot find enough to say about each of them in a paragraph.

**When the subject is too wide or too narrow, your writing is ineffective because it is either too general or too constricted.**

Ex. Spain vs. Norway – **too wide, too different**

Ex. “river” vs. “rio” – **too narrow, too similar**

Ex. Traveling by train in the U.S. vs. Traveling by train in France – **just right, different but still similar**

### **One-sided contrast:**

American trains go to only a few towns, are infrequent, and are often shabby and uncomfortable. In contrast, European trains are much nicer.

### **Balanced contrast:**

American trains go to only a few large cities, run infrequently, and are often shabby and uncomfortable. In contrast, European trains go to almost every small town, are always dependable, and are clean and attractive.